



EVERY DAY IN EVERY WAY

### USDA's Cultural Transformation Action Items

- LEADERSHIP
- RECRUITMENT & RETENTION
- TALENT MANAGEMENT
- EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT
- CUSTOMER FOCUS & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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# MyUSDA

## A Progress Report for Employees on USDA's Cultural Transformation

Volume 6, Issue 1

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### USDA Employees Help Feds Feed Families

By Jennifer McDowell, National Feds Feed Families Chair

Launched in 2009 as part of President Obama's

*United We Serve* campaign, Feds Feed Families is designed to help food banks and pantries stay stocked during summer months when they traditionally see a decrease in donations and an increase in need.

Since 2009, through the amazing generosity of Federal employees, the food drive has collected nearly 57 million pounds of food for those in need. This year alone, more than 17.9 million pounds were donated and provided to food banks and pantries. Every year for the past 12 years, members of the USDA Agricultural Research Service Plant Genetic Resources Union in Geneva, New York, have picked apples grown to evaluate the yield performance of apple rootstocks and donated them to the Geneva Center of Concern.

This year the unit collected 2,400 pounds of Gala apples to be packaged into small bags to be handed out to families during the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Agricultural Research Service (ARS) employees Haleena Messerschmitt, Dawn Dellafave, Sherri Tennies, Venna Wang and Jianfu Jiang with some of the thousands of pounds of apples they picked as part of the Feds Feed Families campaign.

ARS employees Bill Garman, Larry Robertson, Bill Srmack, Bob Martens, Amy Szewc-McFadden, John Keaton, and Venna Wang gathering apples as part of Feds Feed Families in Geneva, NY.

*Photos provided by Gennaro Fazio.*



## Teleworkers Can Participate in FFF Too!

By Tammy Gosney, Food and Nutrition Service

After working in the Food and Nutrition Service Phoenix field office, I am now a teleworker. I kept seeing the Feds Feed Families (FFF) messages and thinking, that is nice that folks in other offices are bringing food to work, gleaning, and taking it to food banks. I didn't think that I should be a part of that until the thought struck me that I live on a little farm and could go outside, harvest some food from my plants and animals, and donate it to the food pantry here in Sierra Vista. I decided to harvest the ampalaya in my garden. I became acquainted with that fruit when I lived in the Philippines. It is slightly bitter and used in eggs, stews, beans, etc. (more savory meals.) It is good for diabetics and folks with high blood pressure. I collected 35 pounds from my garden. I decided to up the ante with eight dozen eggs from my chickens.



I also had some nice quince given to me by a neighbor who had to harvest them all quickly because either the coyotes or javelina were eating them off his young small trees. In a few days they will be a nice ripe yellow and ready for a Moroccan tagine (a soup named after the North African bowl it is served in.) I ended up taking 60 pounds of eggs and produce to the pantry.

Thanks for the email messages that finally sunk in that I too could participate from my virtual office. It felt good to make the donation.



FNS employee Tammy Gosney shares pictures of her ampalaya (top left) along with one of her goats, some quince (below) and dozens of farm fresh eggs all to help USDA's FFF efforts.



## 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results Are In

By Dr. Karlease Kelly, Provost, USDA Virtual University

The results of the 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey have been released. USDA's overall response rate was 66.2%, 16.5% above the government-wide average. Compared to our results from the 2014 survey, USDA's results are 1.19% higher for the Employee Engagement Index, 2.59% higher on the Global Satisfaction Index, and .86% higher for the New IQ index which measures diversity and inclusion.

Compared to our USDA-wide scores last year, we improved on 64 of the 71 workplace items. Some of our highest rated items include item 13, "The work I do is important," item 42, "My supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues," and item 49, "My supervisor treats me with dignity and respect." Overall, the survey results show that leaders are listening to employees and they are working together to make improvements in our workplace. More information about USDA's survey results can be found at this link:

<http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/vu/fevs-fcat.htm>.



## USDA Recognizes “Stolen Girls of Americus, Georgia”

By Lisa Mason, USDA Office of Cultural Transformation

The USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights recently held “In Conversation With...Stolen Girls of Americus, Georgia” in conjunction with USDA’s Observance of the 50th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.



Three of the original “Stolen Girls” served as conversationalists, telling their compelling story. The film entitled, “*Lulu and the Girls of Americus, Georgia, 1963*,” was shown and revealed the story of the more than 32 African-American girls ages 10 to 15 arrested for demonstrating in Americus, Georgia. They were detained for 45 days in an abandoned Civil War stockade in Leesburg, Georgia in deplorable conditions. The event revealed the untold story that people had no knowledge of this occurrence during the civil rights movement. One hundred and thirty USDA employees attended the event and interacted with the panelists.

### USDA Presents at 2015 Out & Equal Workplace Summit

Dozens of USDA employees attended the recent annual Out & Equal Workplace Summit held in Dallas, TX, where they presented and learned about lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender workplace issues. USDA Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Dr. Joe Leonard was one of the featured speakers. He is pictured here (top row center) in front of the USDA exhibit booth along with several USDA employee participants.



## Ethics and the Combined Federal Campaign

By Andrew Tobias, USDA Office of Ethics

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), the largest and most successful workplace fundraising campaign in the world, is in full swing at USDA, and those of us in the Office of Ethics (OE) are available to help make sure the campaign is successful and fully complies with the applicable ethics rules.

OE has worked closely with USDA’s fantastic 2015 Campaign Leadership Team to train all USDA keyworkers and our focus is, as always, on reminding everyone that all contributions made to benefit one of the over 20,000 charities registered by CFC are truly voluntary. Please remember that while we, as Federal employees, are free to encourage support for the CFC by holding campaign kick-offs and other promotional events, they should be undertaken in the spirit of generating interest in the CFC and be open to all individuals without regard to whether an individual participates in the CFC. If you have any questions, the Office of Ethics is here to help! Please visit [www.ethics.usda.gov](http://www.ethics.usda.gov) for additional information.

The 2015 [USDA Combined Federal Campaign](http://www.ethics.usda.gov) (CFC) is underway! The CFC is the largest and most successful workplace charitable giving drive in the world. CFC is the only authorized charitable organization solicitation of Federal employees in their workplaces. The campaign is structured to support and to promote philanthropy through a voluntary program that is cost-efficient and effective in providing all Federal employees the opportunity to impact the CFC charitable interest of their choosing.

# October, Disability Awareness Month

By Ronald R. Bratton, U.S. Forest Service

October is "Disabilities Employment Awareness Month." However, instead of being "disability" awareness, October should be "Individual" Awareness Month.

Did you know that many celebrities suffer from a variety of disabilities? You likely know of some, but you may not know about others. For example, Michael J. Fox has Parkinson's, Scarlett Johansson has discussed her anxiety disorder, Chris Burke lives with Downs Syndrome, Stephen Hawking has Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Marlee Matlin is deaf, Stevie Wonder is blind, Christopher Reeve was quadriplegic, and Franklin D. Roosevelt survived polio.

Each of these individuals have had an impact on our society. While each of these individuals have a physical or mental condition that limits one or more major life activities, that is only one aspect of who they are. If you did not know who Stephen Hawking is, would you hire him? So very often we focus on what we think an individual cannot do and overlook the value that person has to offer to a dynamic workforce. Dan Miller, (Polio) said it best when he said: Pain is inevitable; Suffering is optional; and joy is a choice.

While each of these individuals listed above knows the pain of a disability, they chose joy over suffering. By choosing joy they have brought joy into our lives. I hope you, too, will choose joy and become less aware of an individual's disabilities and more aware of the individual themselves as their disability is only one part of who they are.

## USDA Researcher Wins Prestigious SAMMIE Award

Congratulations to Dr. Hyun Soon Lillehoj of USDA's Agricultural Research Service for winning a 2015 SAMMIE award from the Partnership for Public Service for her career of service.

The SAMMIEs are Service to America Awards. Dr. Lillehoj (pictured right) was recognized for leading influential research to decrease the use of antibiotics in commercial poultry, ensuring the safety of this popular food, and making the U.S. poultry industry more competitive overseas.



To read more about the awards, go to <http://ourpublicservice.org/>.

*(Photo courtesy of the Partnership for Public Service.)*

### Upcoming USDA Special Observance

#### American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month

**Thursday, November 19, 2015 at 10:00 am at the Jefferson Auditorium.**

*Employees receive one hour of diversity training for attending USDA Special Observances.  
You can view recordings of recent [USDA Special Observances by visiting here.](#)*

If you'd like to share your feedback about Cultural Transformation, telework, diversity, or any other aspect of work/life at USDA, send an email to:

[MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov](mailto:MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov) or visit USDA's [Work/Life and Wellness](#) community website if you have access to [USDA Connections](#).



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**If you have ideas for future articles, contact us at [MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov](mailto:MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov)**

### Submit Your Article to MyUSDA

**The monthly deadline for submissions is the end of the first week of each month.**

## Guidance on Submissions to MyUSDA

Submissions to MyUSDA should indicate progress that you, your agency, or your mission area have achieved toward implementing the Secretary's Cultural Transformation (CT) Initiative. The ideal submission includes photos or graphics along with a brief description of the event. The ideal word count for articles is 150-200. All submissions are subject to editing and Departmental review.

Submissions may be in the form of a traditional article with a byline, a first-person account, or any work-related activity, event, or observance demonstrating the Secretary's Cultural Transformation Action Items: Leadership; Recruitment & Retention; Talent Management; Employee Development; and, Customer Focus & Community Outreach.

**Email submissions or further inquiries to [MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov](mailto:MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov).**